June 20, 2001

The Honorable John D. Dingell United States House of Representatives 2328 Rayburn House Office Building Washington, DC 20515-2216

Dear Representative Dingell:

On behalf of the American College of Emergency Physicians (ACEP), our 22,000 members and the 100 million patients we see every year, I am pleased to convey ACEP's support for your bill, the Bipartisan Patient Protection Act of 2001. This bill contains the core provisions that our organization considers critically important elements of meaningful patient protection legislation.

Enactment of a patients' bill of rights has been a high priority for many in Congress and for physicians and their patients. ACEP has advocated for legislation that would provide even handed protections that include protections Congress enacted for Medicare and Medicaid beneficiaries in 1997 and those that were extended to Federal civilian and military employees, Federal health program beneficiaries and SCHIP beneficiaries by Executive Order.

Your legislation provides coverage of emergency medical services without first requiring prior authorization or that the provider be a participant in the patient's health plan. It also requires coverage of care after a patient has been stabilized if the care is appropriate and the provider requests prior authorization. Health plans that fail to respond within one hour after the request are required to cover care provided.

The bill also limits patient cost-sharing by requiring coverage of emergency care, care after stabilization and emergency ambulance services in a manner so that the patient incurs no greater out of pocket liability than if he/she received care from a participating provider with prior authorization.

The "Bipartisan Patient Protection Act of 2001" applies to all insured Americans – all group health plans, insured and self-insured – and to all health insurance issuers in the group and individual market.

The American College of Emergency Physicians has worked diligently for almost eight years with dedicated advocates for access to emergency medical services. ACEP is committed to working with you and all of your colleagues in the Senate and the House of Representatives in a bipartisan manner to achieve a bill on this critical priority. It is important for this legislation to reach the President's desk in form that he can sign into law.

Sincerely,

President

Robert W. Schafermeyer, MD, FACEP

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